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Seventy culturally deprived preschool children, primarily of Mexican-American ethnicity, were chosen to participate in this study of self-perception. One of the most important aspects of a child's personality development concerns the conceptions he has of himself. It is posited that two important influences upon these conceptions are (1) interpersonal relationships and (2) physical environment. To test these postulates, 39 of the subjects of this study were placed in an experimental class presided over by mothers with no teacher training and with a ratio of one adult to four children. The remaining preschoolers attended a regular Head Start class. It was hypothesized that all subjects would demonstrate greater sensitivity to their own selves at the conclusion of the 6-week summer program than they had at the beginning and that the children in the experimental class would show a more significant change in accuracy of self-perception than the others because of the low adult-child ratio. A Doll-Self Point task and a Draw-A-Person task were used as pretests and posttests. The results from these tasks supported the first part of the hypothesis and, with reservations, the second part. Although the experimental class group showed significantly greater increases in self-drawing scores, they also had higher pretest scores. (WD)

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PART B

ACCURACY OF SELF-PERCEPTION AMONG CULTURALLY DEPRIVED PRESCHOOLERS*

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One of the most important aspects of a child's personality development concerns the conceptions he has of himself. The way a child feels about himself influences his values and attitudes, and consciously or unconsciously determines much of his behavior.

The development of a self concept begins early in life and is highly dependent upon social contacts (Radke, Trager and Davis, 1949). Indeed, many writers (Dai, 1953; Murphy, 1944) have maintained that the conception a child has of himself is almost entirely a function of interpersonal relationships. By exposure to other people and their various roles, a child becomes aware of the role he is to play in society and, consequently, becomes more aware of himself.

In addition to the social referent, the way in which a child conceives of himself is strongly influenced by contact with his physical environment. To use Murphy's (1944) example, a child whose tactual sensitivity leads to the enjoyment of soft materials, may identify his own skin and hair with this experience. Self awareness

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may be strongly rooted in this type of experience involving a child's affective response to external stimuli. The child also learns concepts such as size, weight and color by exposure to environmental stimuli and subsequently gains some understanding of his relative position in the world.

The middle class child, by virtue of the education and financial security of his parents, is afforded ample opportunity for a variety of interpersonal relationships and exposure to environmental stimuli. The so-called "culturally deprived" child is in a different position. For a variety of reasons, a child from a lower socioeconomic background is often denied much individual attention or environmental stimulation, and his social relationships are frequently limited. By the time he is ready to begin school he may have only a tenuous and poorly formed conception of who he is and even of his own body. As several studies have pointed out, the culturally deprived child eventually gains a negative self concept as he becomes more aware of differences between himself and his more affluent peers.

Reissman (1962) maintains that deprived children are not introspective nor greatly concerned with themselves and for the most part tend to respond much more to external stimuli. He implies that external or environmental stimulation must precede inner development or self awareness. To the extent that external

or environmental sensitivity is replaced by sensitivity to self, we might expect greater awareness of self or a more differentiated self concept. Furthermore, considering that an individual's awareness of self is in part a function of his relationships with other people, we might also expect greater self awareness or accuracy of self perception where the opportunity for such relationships is increased.

Hypotheses

This study deals with the perceptions culturally deprived preschool children have of themselves, specifically, with Reissman's hypothesis of external-internal sensitivity. The question raised is whether internal sensitivity is accompanied by greater awareness of self.

Hypothesis 1. It was hypothesized that culturally deprived preschool aged children at the start of the preschool programs would display more sensitivity to the environment or to external stimuli than to themselves, as measured by a specifically designed test. By the end of the six-week preschool enrichment programs, it was hypothesized that both groups of subjects would be come more introspective or sensitive to their own bodies as opposed to external stimuli.

Hypothesis II. It appears that the accuracy with which a child perceives himself is strongly influenced by interpersonal

contact. Since there was greater opportunity for personal contact in the Experimental Group which had an adult-child ratio of one to four than in the regular Head Start Control Group with it's ratio of approximately one to thirty, it was further predicted that the Experimental Group would show significantly more change in the accuracy with which they perceived themselves as measured by their drawings of themselves.

Method

A total of 70 culturally deprived subjects from poverty level income families (defined by the poverty guidelines set forth by the Office of Economic Opportunity) were used in this study. The majority of these subjects were Mexican-American. Thirty-nine of the subjects were enrolled in a six-week experimental Head Start program sponsored by the Child Development Evaluation and Research Center of The University of Texas at Austin during the summer of 1967. This program involved the use of mothers from the community who had had no prior experience in teaching (as opposed to trained teachers found in the regular Head Start program). It was anticipated in this study that the small adult-child ratio of one to four which would allow greater opportunity for the adult and child to relate individually would produce greater changes in the hypothesized directions than would be found for subjects enrolled in the regular Head Start programs.

A second group of 30 subjects of similar backgrounds enrolled in regular Head Start programs with a teacher-student ratio of approximately 25 to 1 served as the Control Group.

Procedure

Two dolls, one of dark skin and the other of light skin, which had been in the classroom for a week prior to the initial testing, were placed approximately two feet in front of the subject. Subjects in individual testing sessions were shown nine different cards, each of which contained a pen and ink drawing of a specific part of the body. For example, the first card contained a drawing of an eye, the second card, a drawing of a foot and so on. After the presentation of each card the child was told to "find another one that looks just like this." The subject was not told the name of the part of the body being shown. The subject could either match the stimulus presented on the card with the appropriate part of his own body or with the appropriate part of a doll. He was then given a blank piece of paper and a pencil and asked to draw a picture of himself.

This same testing procedure was repeated at the beginning and end of a six-week period, making it possible to obtain pre- and post-test scores for each child.

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The self drawings were scored according to the Goodenough method for scoring the Draw-A-Person. The single score for each drawing was defined as the amount of body differentiation present in each drawing.

On the Doll-Self Point Task, for the purposes of analysis, each subject was given a single score of one in accord with whether he pointed on a majority of trials to himself or to the dolls. Almost without exception the stimulus originally selected was the one the subject continued to point to for the remaining trials.

Results

To test for overall change from pre- to post-testing, the results of the Doll-Self Test for each group were analyzed using McNemar's Chi Square Test for significance of changes. This test was chosen for both Experimental and Control Groups because of the relatedness of the samples, the pre-post nature of the data, and the nominal classification. A fourfold table of frequencies for the first and second set of responses from the same individuals was set up for each group. These results are shown in Tables 32 and 33.

Table 32

Fourfold Table of Frequencies Showing
Pre- to Post-test Changes from Doll to Doll,
Doll to Self, Self to Self, and Self to Doll
For Experimental and Control Subjects

EXPERIMENTAL

Pre	Post: Doll	Post: Self
Self	4	9
Doll	13	13

CONTROL

Pre	Post: Doll	Post: Self
Self	1	15
Doll	5	11

Table 33

Percentage of Subjects Pointing to Doll and to Self

DOLL			
		Control	Experimental
	Pre-test	63.3	63.9
	Post-test	12.9	41.03
SELF			
		Control	Experimental
	Pre-test	36.7	36.0
	Post-test	87.1	58.97

Figure 1 and Table 34 show the percentage of subjects responding to the Doll-Self Test.

Significant overall changes from pre- to post-testing were found among the subjects in the Experimental Group (X^2 = 4.76, 1 df, p = <.05). Significant overall changes also were found for the Control subjects (X^2 = 8.33, 1 df, p = <.01). No correction for continuity was used since none of the expected frequencies was less than 5.

The results of the pre- and post-test Self Drawings were analyzed using an analysis of variance design for repeated measures. Both groups were analyzed separately for differences between pre- and post-test scores. Post-test scores for the Experimental Group showed a significant increase over pre-test scores (F = 36.256, p = <.001). There were, however, no significant differences between pre- and post-test scores for the Control Group (F = .073, p = .78). The results of the analysis for pre- and post-test Self Drawing Scores are shown in Table 35.

Significant differences between the two groups were found between pre- and post-test Self Drawing Scores. However, because of the pre-test mean scores for the two groups, no conclusions can be drawn regarding the relative efficiency of the treatment effects.

Figure 1

Percentage of Subjects Responding to Doll-Self

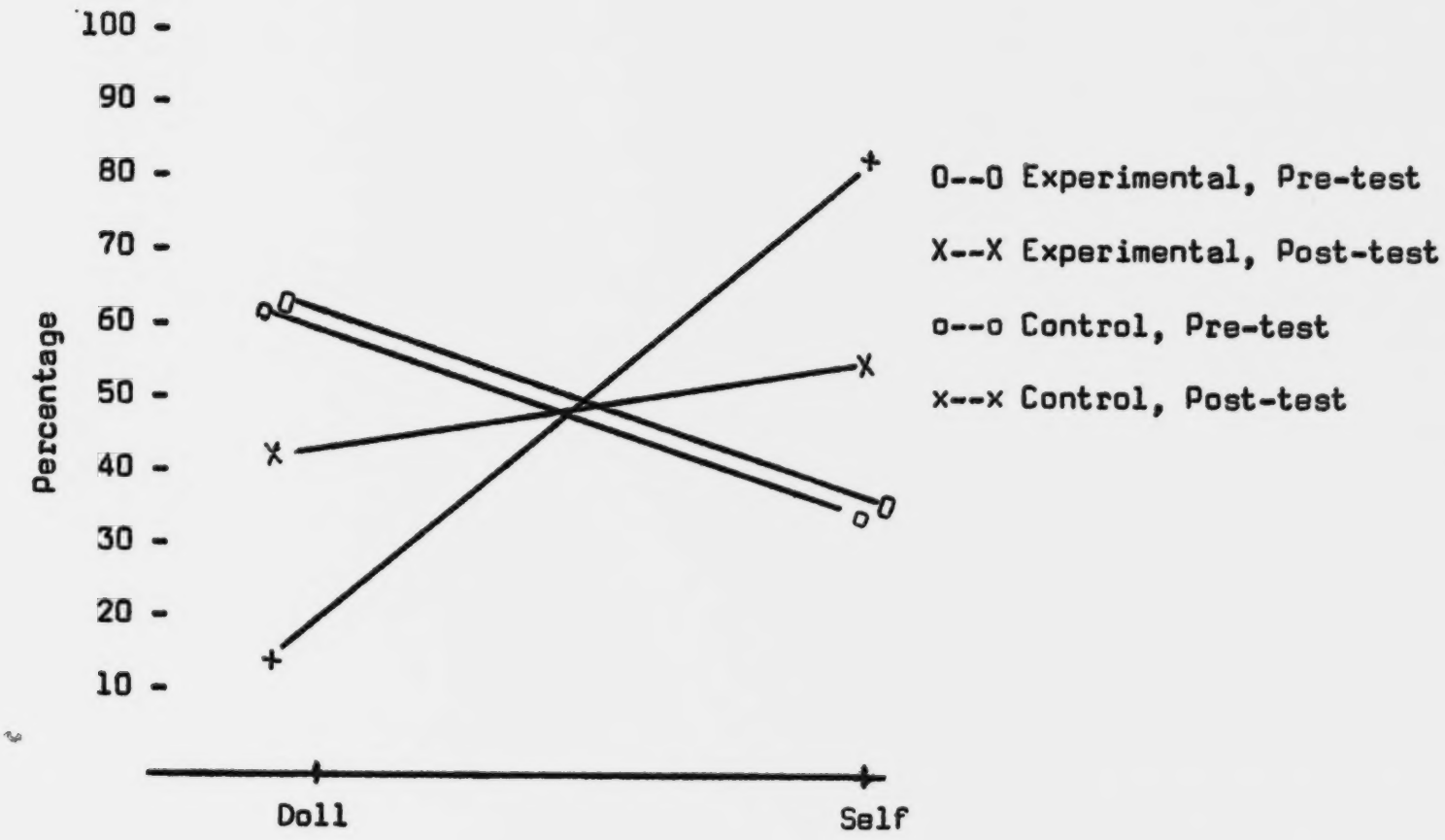

Table 34

Number and Percentage of Subjects in
Control and Experimental Groups Responding to
Doll-Self on Pre- and Post-testing

	Number of Subjects	Percentage Pointing to Self	Percentage Pointing to Doll
Experimental Group			
Pre-test	36	36.0	63.9
Post-test	39	58.97	41.03
Control Group			
Pre-test	30	36.7	63.3
Post-test	31	87.1	12.9

Table 35

Analysis of Pre- and Post-test Self Drawing Scores for Control and Experimental Groups

Source	Mean Square	DF	F-Ratio	P
Total	17.0683	133		
Between	26.6832	66		
Groups	534.2096	1	28.302	.001
Error (G)	18.8751	65		
Within	7.5970	67		
Trials	134.0000	1	31.786	.001
Groups x Trials	100.9803	1	23.953	.001
Error	4.2157	65		

Mean Experimental Group Scores:	
Pre-test	6.1670
Post-test	9.7778
Mean Control Group Scores:	
Pre-test	3.9032
Post-test	4.0323

Discussion

As stated previously, the initial hypothesis predicted that as a consequence of a preschool enrichment program, culturally deprived subjects from both Experimental and Control Groups would change their primary responsiveness or sensitivity to external or environmental stimuli and become more responsive to themselves. It was further predicted that external sensitivity would be accompanied by greater accuracy of self-perception, as measured by pre and post Self Drawings. While both groups were predicted to show changes in Accuracy of Self-Perception, greater changes were predicted for the Experimental Group which had more opportunity for interpersonal contact. By and large, the findings confirm the first hypothesis. The results of the study suggest that culturally deprived preschoolers initially are more responsive to environmental or external stimuli. However, at the end of a six-week Head Start program, they become more sensitive to themselves as opposed to the environment. This trend was found to be the case for both Experimental and Control Groups.

There was also a significant increase in the scores of the Self Drawings over the six-week period for the Experimental Group. To the extent that these drawings are indicative of the way a child sees himself, it can be concluded that the Experimental Group did increase in the Accuracy of Self-Perception. However, despite

the predicted lack of change in Self Drawings for the Control Group which had not had as much opportunity for interpersonal contact with teachers, no definitive conclusions can be drawn regarding the relative efficiency of the two preschool programs. This is due to the fact that the mean pre-test Self Drawing Scores for the Control and Experimental Groups differed significantly from each other. The changes found in the Experimental Group over a six-week period, may be due to their having started off at a higher level which, perhaps, may be indicative of greater capacity for change, rather than to the fact that the treatment accounted for the differences.

The question remains as to how to account for the observed changes toward increased self awareness. Are these changes the result of the preschool programs which provided increased environmental stimulation and personal contact with peers and/or adults? Or are they simply the result of maturation? Since no conclusions can be drawn about the effectiveness of one program over the other, it cannot justifiably be concluded that increased Accuracy of Self-Perception is due to the treatment effects of the Head Start programs. The need for an untreated Control Group is apparent in order to determine the effects of maturation.

Summary

According to many writers, social contacts and environmental stimuli are some of the most vital building blocks for awareness of self. Since both of these are to some extent denied to children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, the question was raised as to the effects of preschool enrichment programs on the accuracy with which culturally deprived children perceived themselves.

It first was hypothesized that these children at the beginning of the program would display more sensitivity to external stimuli but as a function of the programs, would change in the direction of becoming more sensitive to their own bodies. It was further predicted that this internal sensitivity would be accompanied by increased accuracy of self-perception. Since there was greater opportunity for personal contact in the experimental program with its smaller adult-child ratio of one to four than in the regular Head Start classes, it was hypothesized that greater accuracy of self-perception, as defined by pre-post score differences on Self Drawings, would be found among the Experimental Group members.

The first hypothesis was confirmed for both groups. The second hypothesis is open to question. Although the Experimental Group showed a significantly greater increase in Self Drawing Scores than the Control, no conclusions can be drawn regarding the

efficiency of one program over the other due to the inequality of pre-test mean scores. While the Head Start programs did seem to induce noticeable changes in self awareness, the effects of maturation must be assessed.

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